

Installation Address
"Looking Forward"
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Sixth President of
The University of Alabama in Huntsville
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Congressman Brooks, Alabama Senator Holtzclaw, Alabama Representatives Sanderford and Williams, Mayor Battle, Trustees England, Gray, Leonard, McMahon, Sexton, Urquart, Chancellor Witt, distinguished guests, UAHuntsville faculty, staff, retired faculty, and students, thank you all for coming.

We, and I'll introduce the other part of "we" a little later, are pleased to be back in the South and pleased to be at UAHuntsville and in the Huntsville community. This is an exciting environment, and we are proud to be part of it. And, we appreciate the warm and gracious reception we've received.

It was that great American philosopher, fellow St. Louis native, and member of the baseball hall of fame, Yogi Berra, who said, among other pearls of wisdom, "If you don't know where you're going, you might end up some place else." So, in looking forward, we want to reflect on where we are going. Before doing so, though, it is instructive to look at from where we came, the history, traditions and relationships that underpin this institution and that set the stage.

In 1949, the Army decided to relocate the United States' rocket program, led by Dr. Wernher Von Braun, from Texas to the Redstone Arsenal. At about the same time the University of Alabama announced the opening of an extension center in Huntsville at the urging of Pat Richardson, a Huntsville native and University of Alabama law school student. The University of Alabama in Huntsville began as The University of Alabama Huntsville Center in January 1950, enrolling 137 freshman students in 10 classes as detailed in Michael Ward's "Shaping History The University of Alabama Huntsville Foundation", from which much of this history comes, as well as from Phil Gentry's "Comprehensive History" manuscript. Mike Ward is Vice President, Governmental Affairs Chamber of Commerce of Huntsville/Madison County, and Phil Gentry is Communication Director of the UAH Earth System Science Center.

In 1958, Milton Cummings and Beirne Spragins proposed to the Madison Board of County Commissioners that land be acquired and a building built to house The University of Alabama Huntsville Center. Morton Hall opened in 1961.

In 1959, the Commander of the Redstone Arsenal, Major General John B. Medaris told the Alabama Legislature that in order to capitalize economically on technology, it was necessary to have graduate education and research centers in Huntsville. In 1960 Von Braun and his rocket team were transferred, along with some 4,000 Army personnel, to the new civilian agency in Huntsville, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. In 1961 to 1962 the Research Institute was organized and housed at Brown Engineering. In June of 1961, Dr. Von Braun addressed the Alabama Legislature requesting funds to construct a facility for the Research Institute on the campus, which was to support the Army and NASA. And in 1964, the University of Alabama announced that undergraduate degrees would be awarded in Huntsville and in 1966 that the Huntsville Center would become a branch campus, The University of Alabama in Huntsville.

Developing in parallel was an economic development entity in Huntsville, the Research Sites Foundation, focused on land development mostly in what is today Cummings Research Park. The Research Sites Foundation affiliated with the University in 1965 as the University of Alabama Huntsville Foundation, received tax-exempt status, and functions today as the UAH Foundation, a nonprofit corporation that supports the University's fund-raising efforts. The Foundation has been led by a number of illustrious Huntsville civic leaders, including Dag Rowe from whom you heard earlier and his predecessor Ray Jones, who provided years of dedicated leadership to the Foundation on behalf of the University.

In 1969, the University of Alabama System was formed, and the newly established Board of Trustees of the University of Alabama voted to establish the branches in Huntsville and Birmingham as autonomous campuses of the System. Benjamin Graves, President of Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi was selected as the first president of The University of Alabama in Huntsville, followed through the years by John Wright, Louis Padulo, Joseph Moquin on an Interim basis, Frank Fanz, and David Williams.

The men's ice hockey program was started by Joe Ritch in 1979. The team won championships at the club and NCAA Division II level, and continues to play at the Division I level today. In addition to winning ice hockey championships, we can also proudly boast that The University of Alabama in Huntsville football team is still undefeated. I would encourage you to buy a tee shirt in the Bookstore that so proudly proclaims.

In addition to going undefeated in football, the University is also home to the discovery of the first high-temperature semiconductor in 1987 by Professor M.K. Wu and his graduate students Jim Ashburn and C.J. Torng. Ashburn developed the compound, Yttrium Barium Copper Oxide, and successfully tested it in Wilson Hall. An historical plaque stands in front of Wilson Hall commemorating the event.

It is a rich history that brings us here today, a history inextricably linked to men and women and events of signal importance to the safety and security of the nation and to the exploration of the environment beyond the planet on which we live. Today, the University enrolls over 7,600 students in a broad array of undergraduate and graduate programs emphasizing engineering and science with a strong complement of the arts, has undergone and continues an evolution from a commuter campus to one with a significant fraction of residential students and with vibrant campus life as evidenced by the groundbreaking this afternoon for a new Student Life Center, conducts extensive research under the support of the Department of Defense and NASA and other federal agencies, and is classified along with 73 other public universities as having very high research activity by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

This is an institution of accomplishment and of accomplished individuals including:

National Science Foundation Faculty Early Career Development Award winners Jeffrey Evans of the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering for his work on the influence of synthesis methodologies on the behavior of nickel and nickel-based super alloys and Vladimir Florinski of the Department of Physics and the Center for Space Plasma and Aeronomic Research for his work in computational space physics. The NSF Faculty Early Career Development Award is NSF's most prestigious award in support of the early career-development activities of faculty who most effectively integrate research and education within the context of the mission of their organization.

The recent US Department of Education grant for \$1.1 million, the largest in the history of UAHuntsville from the Department of Education, to support the work of Jason O'Brien in the Department of

Education and Andrea Word-Allbritton in the Department of English in second language instruction training for Huntsville City School teachers and administrators over the next five years.

The recent appointment of Lori Lioce in the College of Nursing as Vice President of Operations for the International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning.

Recent publications in Science, arguably the most prestigious scientific publication, of Eric Fong and Allen Wilhite of the College of Business Administration on research ethics and Gary Zank of the Department of Physics and Center for Space Plasma and Aeronomic Research, along with co-authors, on results from the Interstellar Boundary Explorer on the structure of the heliosphere, the charged particle bubble around the Solar System, as it moves through the interstellar medium.

We can anticipate such accomplishments and more to continue as we address the challenges ahead for us and higher education in general, and there are many. The US economy is weak, and economies around the World are on the verge of collapse. Support for scientific research has suffered, and the future is uncertain. The US housing bubble, unsustainable prices of housing compared to intrinsic value, burst or is in the process of bursting. And there is debate over whether there is a higher education bubble; is cost higher than the rate of return on the education? Is there enough intrinsic value to sustain the price?

For public universities, state funding, as a result of the economic downturn, has declined over the past years. As a result in part, coupled with increased regulation and accountability, customer demands, competition among universities and with for-profits and on-line education, cost of technology, among other environmental threats, tuition levels have increased, increased faster than the rate of inflation. While we have decided that K-12 education is a benefit to society and we pay for it rather than the recipient, that is not the case for higher education; it is perceived as a mix of personal and societal benefit and there is no agreed upon formula for that mix and hence uncertain public subsidies.

It is not likely that public higher education will return to the days of the 1970's and 1980's where tuition revenue accounted for one-quarter to one-third of revenue used to support the educational enterprise. Tuition now accounts for fractions of half or more at many public institutions, UAH included, and we need to confront that reality.

What is important in the current higher education environment is to ensure a competitive advantage, to know what you are and looking forward, what you want to be. Have something to sell. "If you don't know where you're going, you might end up some place else."

Our competitive advantage is our environment. A research-intensive university, technologically focused, science and engineering, but yet where that technology converges with culture and the arts, surrounded by a rich mix of federal agencies and engineering services and research and development firms with whom students, faculty, and research staff interact on a regular basis. If you intersect our basic Carnegie Classification of very high research activity with our undergraduate program classification, we are one of fourteen public universities so classified. We have a competitive advantage but we need to enhance it through strategies we are developing, that is, as Michael Porter of Harvard and Mark Kramer of FSG Social Impact Advisors would put it, "choosing a unique positioning and a distinctive value chain to deliver on it."

We will continue to build a campus that meets social as well as intellectual and physical needs — a community that fosters thoughtful sensitivity to many points of view, to the humanistic and the artistic as we advance scientific and technological frontiers. When students leave us, they become alumni, and we want to ensure that future generations of alumni are engaged with UAH's continuing growth and all that that implies as to the market value of their degree.

Let me close by saying first that "Behind every good man is a better woman." So, let me introduce that better woman, my wife Beth. What I have done I could not have done without her support and understanding, and she tells me I require a lot of understanding!

Thank you, Beth.

I'd also like to introduce our daughter Allison, her husband Brian and grandson Jackson of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and our son Erich of Palm City, Florida.

There are two others I'd like to acknowledge, Mac Mellor of Franklin, Tennessee, who while a faculty member at Purdue University served as an invaluable mentor and friend and continues to serve in both capacities today and Mack Portera, retired Chancellor of The University of Alabama System, also a friend and mentor beginning with our days together at Mississippi State University.

And, let me close by thanking Board President Pro tem Paul Bryant, the Board of Trustees, and Chancellor Witt for having confidence that I could add some value to UAHuntsville, and adding a great deal of thanks to Frank Franz, whose tireless work on behalf of UAHuntsville and Huntsville over the years as President of UAH laid the groundwork for where we are today and positioned this institution well.

Looking forward. Yogi Berra had this to say as well: "The future ain't what it used to be." While perhaps true, it's bright for UAHuntsville.

Thank you.